

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2145

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4771

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SOPN, SF
SUBJECT: REACTION TO AMBASSADOR'S AUGUST 8 SPEECH

REF: PRETORIA 4597

1. THE FOLLOWING IS AN EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF AN ARTICLE
BY LUCAS DE LANGE THAT APPEARED IN "DIE TRANSVALER" (PRO SAG)
AUGUST 14.

BEGIN TEXT:

YANKS WILL NOT PRESSURE SOUTH AFRICA
NEW AMBASSADOR ISSUES WARNING, HOWEVER...
DESPITE EVERYTHING THAT HAS BEEN SAID SINCE PRESIDENT
JIMMY CARTER TOOK OFFICE, AMERICA'S POLICY TOWARD SOUTH
AFRICA IS REMARKABLY MODERATE CONSIDERING THE PRESSURE ON
THE ADMINISTRATION FROM THE REST OF AFRICA AND ALSO FROM
WITHIN THE U.S. CONGRESS.

THE MESSAGE THAT THE NEW AMERICAN AMBASSADOR, MR.
WILLIAM B. EDMONDSON, BROUGHT FORTH IN A SPEECH LAST WEEK,
WAS THAT WASHINGTON WOULD GO FORWARD WITH ITS MODERATE POLICY.

THERE ARE NO GROUNDS FOR THE STATEMENTS THAT AMERICA
REALLY WANTS TO SERIOUSLY HARM SOUTH AFRICA OVER THE RACE
ISSUE. NEVERTHELESS, IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT MEMBERS OF
CONGRESS SUCH AS SENATOR DICK CLARK AND CONGRESSMAN ANDREW
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MCGUIRE WILL TRY TO EXERT GREATER PRESSURE ON ISSUES SUCH
AS THE ARMS BOYCOTT OR THE CURRENTLY LIMITED ECONOMIC
SANCTIONS.

AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES HAD GIVEN THIS SAME
MESSAGE TO "DIE TRANSVALER" AT THE SAME TIME AS THE AMBASSADOR'S
SPEECH. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG WHILE THAT THE
POLICY WAS SO CLEARLY DEFINED.

THE SPEECH ALSO CONTAINED WARNINGS THAT IN THE EVENT OF FUTURE INCIDENTS SUCH AS THE DEATH OF BIKO OR THE BANNING OF BLACK POLITICAL MOVEMENTS, AMERICA'S MODERATE POLICY WOULD HAVE TO BE REEVALUATED.

THE REASON IS THAT PRESSURE ON THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TO ACT AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA, THOUGH CURRENTLY LATENT, COULD REACH GREATER PROPORTIONS. THERE IS NO COMPELLING REASONS FOR THE U.S. TO GO AGAINST THIS PRESSURE EXCEPT THAT IT WOULD MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR HER TO PLAY THE ROLE OF IMPARTIAL MEDIATOR IN AFRICA.

AN OTHER ISSUE TOUCHED ON IS THAT AMERICA'S CAPABILITY TO DIRECTLY INFLUENCE EVENTS IS LIMITED. SHE WILL NOT, FOR EXAMPLE, PUSH WHITE SOUTH AFRICA INTO A POSITION WHERE THERE WILL ONLY BE RADICAL CHOICES. IN THE RHODESIAN TRAGEDY, AMERICA'S ABILITY TO INFLUENCE THE SITUATION IS VERY LIMITED.

A CONVINCING INDICATION FROM THE SOUTH AFRICANS THAT THEY ARE MAKING A GENUINE EFFORT TO GET RID OF DISCRIMINATION AND TO GIVE THE OTHER RACES A CHANCE TO PLAY MEANINGFUL ROLE IN DETERMINING THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE WILL HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON U.S. ATTITUDES TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA.

THAT WILL ALSO STRENGTHEN THE ADMINISTRATION'S ABILITY TO MAINTAIN AN EVEN-HANDED POLICY TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA IN THE FACE OF INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE.

WHAT OBVIOUSLY PLAYS A NOTABLE ROLE IN THE U.S. EMPHASIS
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ON MODERATION TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA IS THE PROGRESS THAT IS BEING MADE IN SOUTH WEST. THEY BELIEVE THAT THEIR ROLE AS IMPARTIAL MEDIATOR CONTRIBUTED TO THE REMARKABLE BREAKTHROUGH.

ALSO THE NEUTRALIZATION OF TENSIONS BETWEEN ANGOLA AND ZAIRE OBVIOUSLY IS BELIEVED IN WASHINGTON TO BE THE RIGHT COURSE OF ACTION TO IMPROVE U.S. INFLUENCE IN ANGOLA. IF THEY HAVE INFLUENCE THERE, THEY WILL BE ABLE TO AVOID FUTURE SHABAS AND ALSO MAKE THE TRANSITION TO NAMIBIAN INDEPENDENCE EASIER. THE REASONS FOR THIS IS THAT RUSSIA HAS USED ANGOLA AS A CHANNEL BY WHICH TO INSTIGATE THE REVOLUTION IN RHODESIA AND SOUTH WEST. END TEXT.

2. "DIE TRANSVALER" ASSISTANT EDITOR AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS EDITOR, DE LANGE, WAS EVEN MORE SUPPORTIVE OF THE SPEECH IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH THE POL COUNSELOR. HE SAID THAT THE SPEECH PUT THINGS INTO A GOOD PERSPECTIVE AND NEEDED TO BE SAID. DE LANGE ACCUSED HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS OF SENSATIONALIZING THE ISSUE, TAKING STATEMENTS OUT OF CONTEXT IN AN EFFORT TO CREATE THE IMPRESSION OF WARSENING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND SOUTH AFRICA.
EDMONDSON

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NNN

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